

Foster Parents and Caregivers

Changing Lives One Child at a Time

January 2007



“My goal is to have homes waiting for kids instead of kids waiting for homes.”

*– Karen Jorgenson, President,
National Foster Parents Association*

For all you who have opened your homes – and your hearts – to children, we say thank you.

Sharing Information About the Child in Your Care

As a caregiver, we want you to participate in and be heard in staffings and Court hearings regarding the children in your care. As a reminder, CA is required to notify you 5 days prior to a regularly scheduled shared planning meeting/staffing and 10 working days prior to a regularly scheduled Review Hearing regarding the child in your care. The Notification of staffing can be in writing, in person or via the telephone. The Notification of Court Hearing is often mailed with the Individual Service and Safety Plan.

If you have not received notices of shared planning meetings or Court Hearings, talk with the child's social worker to find out when they are scheduled. The social worker can also provide you with information about providing input at both the shared planning/staffing meeting and the Court Hearing.

Calling All Unlicensed Relative Caregivers!

If you are an unlicensed relative caregiver check your mailbox in January for a questionnaire from DCFS (CA) about training issues. The questionnaire is very short and asks questions about what training you need and want, and what DCFS can do to make it easier for you to attend training. A postage paid return envelope will be included, and if you have Internet access, you can also complete the survey on the web. A Spanish language version will also be available for those whose main language is Spanish. To ensure the survey results remain anonymous, the results will be compiled by Washington State's University's Social and Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC). The survey results will be used by DCFS (CA) to improve the kinds of training provided to unlicensed relative caregivers and to make it easier for unlicensed relative caregivers to attend training. Questions about the survey can be addressed to SESRC at their toll free telephone number: 1-800-932-5393. We are asking that the main caregiver in each household complete the survey, and we hope you will be willing to take a few minutes to participate in this survey and tell us what you think about training for yourself as unlicensed relative caregivers. Thanks in advance for your help!

As an unlicensed relative caregiver, we want to invite you to participate in any trainings that are available to licensed foster parents. The trainings provide lots of information for caregivers. We encourage you to ask at your local DCFS office for a list of trainings available in your area or you can access a list of available training for foster parents and caregivers on the Foster Parent website at <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>.

2007 Foster Parent and Caregiver Conference

Planning is underway for the 2007 Conference. This year's conference will be held September 23, 24 and 25, 2007 in Ocean Shores at the Ocean Shores Convention Center. If you would like to participate in the planning committee, please contact Barb Bofinger at (360) 902-7986 or via email at boba300@dshs.wa.gov. Watch for more information in the monthly Newsletters.

Basic Health Accepting Applications

The state's Basic Health plan is currently accepting applications. If yourself, a youth transitioning out of foster care or someone you know may qualify for this plan (see below), please visit <http://www.basichealth.hca.wa.gov> to download an application or apply online.

Those who don't have internet access can call 1-800-660-9840.

Basic Health, which offers health care coverage through private health plans around the state, is for Washington State residents who are:

- Within Basic Health's income guidelines
- Not eligible for free or purchased Medicare
- Not institutionalized at the time of enrollment
- Not attending school full-time in the United States on a student visa

Important Resources and Numbers

Important numbers to know when you take care of children in out of home:

Support for foster parents under investigation for allegations of abuse or neglect: **Foster Parent Investigation Retention Support Team (FIRST)** 1-253-219-6782. Monday – Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

Support systems for foster parents

Under contracts with the state three private agencies are working to build support for you within the foster care community. Support systems such as hubs, support groups and matching new foster parents with veteran foster parents are being built.

If you live in eastern Washington, the Olympic Peninsula down through Pacific County or from Thurston County to Clark County, call 1-888-794-1794 for information about how to get support through these systems.

If you live in King County, call 1-206-605-0664 and in any county from Snohomish County north, call 360-510-7601 or 360-863-6530.

If you live in Pierce or Kitsap counties, call 253-473-9252.

General foster parent information for the state of Washington/FPAWS: **Foster Parent Association of Washington State**, 1-800-391-CARE (2273) or www.fpaws.org. FPAWS is seeking new members and supporting foster parents in many ways, including referrals to local associations.

Family Help Line: 1-800-932-HOPE or www.parenttrust.org. The Family Help Line is a free, statewide training and referral line for the families of Washington State. Last year, the Family Help Line received over 5,000 calls and requests for information. Calls can last up to 90 minutes and parents can call as often as needed.

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868.

Mental Health Crisis Line Information: The crisis line telephone number for your county or region is available on the DSHS Mental Health Division website at: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/crisis.shtml>

Kitsap and Pierce County information about becoming a foster parent or to receive foster parent support: Foster Care Resource Network, 1-253-473-9252. Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day.

Children's Administration Foster Parent Website and Foster Parent Training Website

Trainings are open to all licensed foster parents, licensed relative caregivers and unlicensed relative caregivers.

For information about foster parent and caregiver training <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>

Children's Administration Foster Care Listserv

Join the 400 people who have subscribed to the List Serve <http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1>

The list serve provides over 400 subscribers with information regarding new resources for the work you do in caring for children, information on parenting and resources to support you and the children in your care.